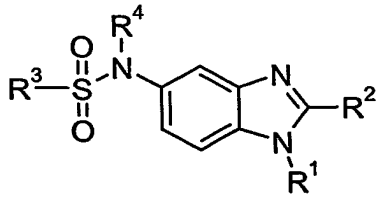
What is claimed is:

1. A compound of Formula I or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof:



I

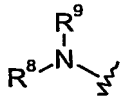
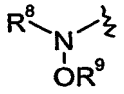
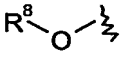
wherein

R^1 is selected from C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, R^5R^6N-C_{1-6}alkyl, R^5O-C_{1-6} alkyl, $R^5C(=O)N(-R^6)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, $R^5R^6NS(=O)_2$-C_{1-6}alkyl, $R^5CS(=O)_2N(-R^6)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, $R^5R^6NC(=O)N(-R^7)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, $R^5R^6NS(=O)_2N(R^7)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{1-10}hydrocarbylamino, R^5R^6N-, R^5O-, $R^5C(=O)N(-R^6)$-, $R^5R^6NS(=O)_2$-, $R^5CS(=O)_2N(-R^6)$-, $R^5R^6NC(=O)N(-R^7)$-, $R^5R^6NS(=O)_2N(R^7)$-, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}aryl-$C(=O)$-, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl and C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$-; wherein said C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{6-10}aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{1-10}hydrocarbylamino, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}aryl-$C(=O)$-, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl or C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$- used in defining R^1 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy, and $-NR^5R^6$;

R^2 is selected from C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl, R^5R^6N-, C_{3-5}heteroaryl, C_{6-10}aryl and C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl, wherein said C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-8}cycloalkyl, C_{3-8}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-5}heteroaryl, C_{6-10}aryl or C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl used in defining R^2 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy, and $-NR^5R^6$;

wherein R^5, R^6 and R^7 are independently selected from –H, C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl, and a divalent C_{1-6}group that together with another divalent R^5, R^6 or R^7 forms a portion of a ring;

R^3 is selected from –H, C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl,


, 
, and 
optionally subsitituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogen, amino and C_{1-6}alkoxy;

each of R^8 and R^9 is independently selected from –H, C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{3-6}heterocylcyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl, and a divalent C_{1-6}group that together with another divalent group selected from R^8 and R^9 forms a portion of a ring, wherein said C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{3-6}heterocylcyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl, or divalent C_{1-6}group is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy, and –NR^5R^6; and

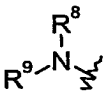
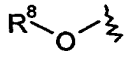
R^4 is selected from –H, C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, and C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl.

2. A compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein

R^1 is selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl, phenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-10}heterocyclyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}heterocyclyl and C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl, wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl, phenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-10}heterocyclyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}heterocyclyl and C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl used in defining R^1 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy, and -NR^5R^6;

R^2 is selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-5}heteroaryl, R^5R^6N-, and phenyl, wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl,

C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-5}heteroaryl, R^5R^6N-, and phenyl used in defining R^2 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy and -NR^5R^6;

R^3 is selected from –H, C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl,  and  optionally subsitituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl and halogen;

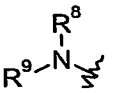
each of R^8 and R^9 is independently selected from –H, C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl and C_{3-6}heterocylcyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl, C_{3-6}heterocylcyl-C_{1-6}alkyl and a divalent C_{1-6}group that together with another divalent group selected from R^8 and R^9 forms a portion of a ring, wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl and C_{3-6}heterocylcyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl, C_{3-6}heterocylcyl-C_{1-6}alkyl or divalent C_{1-6}group are optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy and –NR^5R^6; and

R^4, R^5 and R^6 are independently selected from –H and C_{1-3}alkyl.

3. A compound as claimed claim 1,

wherein R^1 is selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, phenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, and C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl, wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, phenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, and C_{4-6}cycloalkenyl used in defining R^1 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy, and –NR^5R^6;

R^2 is selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl and C_{3-6}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl, wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{3-6}cycloalkyl and C_{3-6}cycloalkyl-C_{1-4}alkyl used in defining R^2 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy and –NR^5R^6;

R^3 is selected from C_{2-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl and  optionally subsitituted with one or more C_{1-6}alkyl, and;

wherein said C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl contain at least one nitrogen ring atom and the radical of C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl is located on the at least one nitrogen ring atom, and wherein each of R^8 and R^9 is independently selected from –H, C_{1-6}alkyl, morpholinyl- C_{1-3}alkyl, pyrrolidinyl-C_{1-3}alkyl, and piperidinyl-C_{1-3}alkyl, wherein said C_{1-6}alkyl, morpholinyl-C_{1-3}alkyl, pyrrolidinyl-C_{1-3}alkyl, and piperidinyl-C_{1-3}alkyl are optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy and $-NR^5R^6$; and

R^4, R^5 and R^6 are independently selected from –H and C_{1-3}alkyl.

4. A compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein

R^1 is selected from cyclohexylmethyl, cyclopentylmethyl, cyclobutylmethyl, cyclopropylmethyl, 4,4-difluorocyclohexanemethyl, cyclohexylethyl, cyclopentylethyl, tetrahydropyranylmethyl, tetrahydrofuranylmethyl, 1-piperidinylethyl, N-methyl-2-piperidinyl-methyl and benzyl;

R^2 is selected from t-butyl, n-butyl, 2-methyl-2-butyl, isopentyl, 2-methoxy-2-propyl, 2-hydroxy-propyl, trifluoromethyl, 1,1-difluoroethyl, 2,2,2-trifluoroethyl, 1-cyclopropyl-ethyl, 1-methyl-propyl, 1,1-dimethyl-propyl, 1,1-dimethyl-3-buten-1-yl, ethyl, and 2-propyl;

R^3 is C_{2-5}alkyl and R^8R^9N-, wherein R^8 and R^9 are independently selected from –H, and C_{1-3}alkyl.

5. A compound selected from:

N-[2-*tert*-Butyl-1-(cyclohexylmethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazol-5-yl]-*N*,*N*',*N*'-trimethylsulfamide;

N-[2-*tert*-Butyl-1-(cyclohexylmethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazol-5-yl]-*N*',*N*'-diethyl-*N*-methylsulfamide;

N'-[1-(cyclohexylmethyl)-2-(1,1-dimethylpropyl)-1*H*-benzimidazol-5-yl]-*N*,*N*-dimethyl-sulfamide;

N-[2-*tert*-Butyl-1-(tetrahydro-2*H*–pyran-4-ylmethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazol-5-yl]-*N*-methylbutane-1-sulfonamide;

N-[2-*tert*-Butyl-1-(tetrahydro-2*H*–pyran-4-ylmethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazol-5-yl]-*N*-methyl-2-pyrrolidin-1-ylethanesulfonamide;

N-[2-*tert*-Butyl-1-(tetrahydro-2*H*–pyran-4-ylmethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazol-5-yl]-*N*-methyl-2-morpholin-4-ylethanesulfonamide;

N-[2-*tert*-Butyl-1-(tetrahydro-2*H*–pyran-4-ylmethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazol-5-yl]-*N*-methyl-2-piperidin-1-ylethanesulfonamide;

N-[2-*tert*-Butyl-1-(tetrahydro-2*H*–pyran-4-ylmethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazol-5-yl]-2-methoxy-*N*-methylethanesulfonamide;

N-[2-*tert*-Butyl-1-(tetrahydro-2*H*–pyran-4-ylmethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazol-5-yl]-2-[(2-hydroxyethyl)amino]-*N*-methylethanesulfonamide;

2-(2-Aminoethoxy)-*N*-[2-*tert*-butyl-1-(tetrahydro-2*H*-pyran-4-ylmethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazol-5-yl]-*N*-methylethanesulfonamide;

N-[2-*tert*-Butyl-1-(tetrahydro-2*H*–pyran-4-ylmethyl)-1*H*-benzimidazol-5-yl]-*N*-methylethylenesulfonamide;

N-{2-*tert*-Butyl-1-[(4,4-difluorocyclohexyl)methyl]-1*H*-benzimidazol-5-yl}-*N*-methylbutane-1-sulfonamide;

N-{2-*tert*-Butyl-1-[(4,4-difluorocyclohexyl)methyl]-1*H*-benzimidazol-5-yl}-*N*-methyl-2-piperidin-1-ylethanesulfonamide and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

6. A compound according to any one of claims 1-5 for use as a medicament.

7. The use of a compound according to any one of claims 1-5 in the manufacture of a medicament for the therapy of pain.

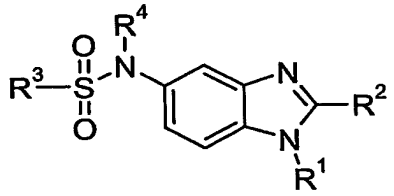
8. The use of a compound according to any one of claims 1-5 in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of anxiety disorders.

9. The use of a compound according to any one of claims 1-5 in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of cancer, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's chorea, Alzheimer's disease, gastrointestinal disorders and cardiovascular disorders.

10. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to any one of claims 1-5 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

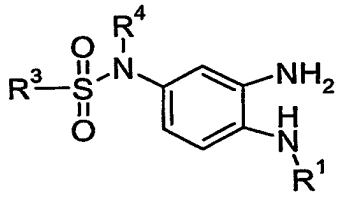
11. A method for the therapy of pain in a warm-blooded animal, comprising the step of administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to any one of claims 1-5.

12. A method for preparing a compound of Formula I,



I

comprising the step of reacting a compound of Formula II,



II

with a compound of $R^2C(=O)X$, in the presence of a base and optionally a coupling reagent, followed by treatment by an acid;

wherein

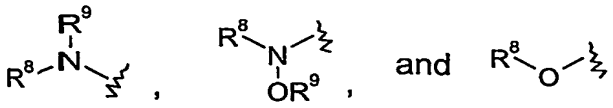
X is selected from Cl, Br, F and OH;

R^1 is selected from C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, R^5R^6N-C_{1-6}alkyl, R^5O-C_{1-6} alkyl, $R^5C(=O)N(-R^6)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, $R^5R^6NS(=O)_2$-C_{1-6}alkyl, $R^5CS(=O)_2N(-R^6)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, $R^5R^6NC(=O)N(-R^7)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, $R^5R^6NS(=O)_2N(R^7)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{1-10}hydrocarbylamino, R^5R^6N-, R^5O-, $R^5C(=O)N(-R^6)$-, $R^5R^6NS(=O)_2$-, $R^5CS(=O)_2N(-R^6)$-, $R^5R^6NC(=O)N(-R^7)$-, $R^5R^6NS(=O)_2N(R^7)$-, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}aryl-$C(=O)$-, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl and C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$-; wherein said C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{6-10}aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{1-10}hydrocarbylamino, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}aryl-$C(=O)$-, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl or C_{3-6}heterocyclyl-$C(=O)$- used in defining R^1 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy, and $-NR^5R^6$;

R^2 is selected from C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl, R^5R^6N-, C_{3-5}heteroaryl, C_{6-10}aryl and C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl, wherein said C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-8}cycloalkyl, C_{3-8}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl, C_{3-5}heteroaryl, C_{6-10}aryl or C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl used in defining R^2 is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy, and $-NR^5R^6$;

wherein R^5, R^6 and R^7 are independently selected from –H, C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{2-6}alkenyl, C_{2-6}alkynyl, and a divalent C_{1-6}group that together with another divalent R^5, R^6 or R^7 forms a portion of a ring;

R^3 is selected from –H, C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocycloalkyl,



optionally subsitituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogen, amino and C_{1-6}alkoxy;

each of R^8 and R^9 is independently selected from –H, C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{3-6}heterocylcyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl, and a divalent C_{1-6}group that together with another divalent group selected from R^8 and R^9 forms a portion of a ring, wherein said C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{3-6}heterocyclyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{3-6}heterocylcyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl-C_{1-6}alkyl, or divalent C_{1-6}group is optionally substituted by one or more groups selected from halogen, cyano, nitro, methoxy, ethoxy, methyl, ethyl, hydroxy, and $-NR^5R^6$; and

R^4 is selected from –H, C_{1-10}alkyl, C_{2-10}alkenyl, C_{2-10}alkynyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl, C_{3-10}cycloalkyl-C_{1-6}alkyl, and C_{4-8}cycloalkenyl-C_{1-6}alkyl.